



USAID | MACEDONIA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. provides free wireless internet access to over 50 Municipalities in Macedonia

Skopje, February 01, 2006— More than fifty municipalities across Macedonia will gain increased access to the world and to a variety of information resources through wireless internet access provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a part of the U.S. Mission to Macedonia.

“Wireless Internet connectivity is a very valuable tool,” said Dick Goldman, USAID Mission Director. “We anticipate that this expanded internet access will lead to dramatic improvement in the communication and efficiency of these local governments, and in their ability to respond to the concerns of citizens and businesses.”

The aim of this initiative is to increase Internet access and use, as well as the overall efficiency of local government offices. A further goal is to increase the level of cooperation between local governments.

USAID has provided 50 Customer Premises Equipment (CPE) units for wireless internet, which have been donated by Motorola, to ZELS, the Association of Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of Macedonia. ZELS will select the municipalities that will participate, giving priority to rural municipalities that cannot access the Internet via ADSL. On.Net, a private internet service provider company, will deliver the equipment, carry out installation, and provide internet connectivity. They will also provide CPE units for an additional 15 municipalities, free of rental charge. These 15 units and the 50 donated by USAID will be used to cover the municipalities selected by ZELS.

USAID’s Macedonia Connects project, through On.Net, has already brought free wireless internet access to a total of 545 sites throughout Macedonia. These sites, connected in 2005, include primary and secondary schools, universities, secondary school dormitories, bureaus for educational development and several NGOs.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested more than \$400 million in Macedonia since 1993. More than 30 projects worth \$35 million a year are currently being implemented. These

projects are designed to support Macedonia's transition to a free market-based, multi-ethnic democracy. They include initiatives to accelerate economic growth, develop democratic institutions, and educate citizens for a modern economy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.